



Pubs

OLC # 78 1543/10

Washington, D.C. 20505

3 JUL 1978

The Honorable Les Aspin, Chairman
Subcommittee on Oversight
Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Les:

I very much appreciated your letter of 22 June, both the kind words you passed on regarding the study on Soviet propaganda, and your constructive criticisms of the sections dealing with the Soviet propaganda campaign on the neutron bomb.

In drafting the study, we attempted to avoid any implication that U.S. policymakers were "duped" by Soviet propaganda on this weapon--a position to which we certainly do not adhere. Neither the annex on the neutron bomb campaign nor the main body of the study evaluate the possible impact of Soviet propaganda in the United States. Regarding the neutron bomb campaign specifically, paragraph 26 a merely states that one of the aims of Soviet propaganda presumably was to generate public hostility towards the U.S. defense establishment. Our main concern was with the efficacy of Soviet propaganda in stimulating anti-Americanism abroad, and in that regard we focussed on the neutron bomb campaign because it was the largest, most vigorous and apparently successful program of its type which the Soviets had launched in recent years. We stressed that this program was based on a gross exaggeration of the neutron bomb's lethality (not on the reasoned arguments you put forward), particularly in comparison to the destructive capacity of many Soviet weapons.

On the other hand, it is fair comment that we did not specifically state that there was a reputable school of thought opposed to the development of the neutron bomb, and we certainly ought to lay to rest any ambiguity that this has created. Therefore, I would pose no objection

if the Committee desired to add an additional paragraph at the end of the annex, to read as follows:

This conclusion should not obscure the fact that many informed individuals in Europe opposed the "neutron bomb" on well thought out grounds entirely unrelated to the content of the Soviet propaganda campaign. That campaign, in fact, did not bother to come to grips with the pros and cons raised by military experts with regard to the "neutron bomb." The point is, rather, that by conducting a massive propaganda campaign exaggerating the lethality of this weapon, the Soviets made "neutron bomb" a household scare-word in Europe, if not throughout the world.

NS/

STANSFIELD TURNER

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U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PERMANENT SELECT COMMITTEE
ON INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515

June 22, 1978

Executive Registry

78-5730/B

DD/O 78-4605

Honorable Stansfield Turner
Director of Central Intelligence
Washington, D.C. 20505

Dear Stan:

I am writing in reference to a statement for the record which was prepared by the Central Intelligence Agency at the request of my colleague on the House Intelligence Committee, Mr. John Ashbrook. The request arose on April 20, 1978, in the context of hearings on CIA-media relations, for which you were the principal witness. As you recall, Mr. Ashbrook desired for the record an unclassified study from the CIA on the subject of Soviet propaganda activities.

The Committee has received this study and its length, detail, and general quality are impressive. I wish each of our requests for information from the intelligence services were handled as seriously and thoroughly.

One aspect of the study, however, is troublesome and I write this letter to draw your attention to its implications. I refer to the annex on the neutron bomb, and the sundry references to Soviet propaganda against the weapons system found scattered through the study.

No one can deny that the Soviet Union engaged in a major propaganda campaign against the bomb. We and our European friends were well aware of this; as is often the case, the Soviets were not subtle. In fact, Soviet propaganda on the neutron bomb was a subject of common -- and pejorative -- discussion in the European press. (See the Koelner Stadt-Anzeiger, April 8, 1978, for instance.) But Soviet propaganda was only one factor in the melange of considerations that entered into the worldwide examination of this issue.

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As you are well aware there is a school of thought on nuclear deterrence which holds that making nuclear weapons smaller, cleaner and more usable tempts people to use them in a crisis and therefore makes nuclear war more likely. The opposite school, of course, believes that making nuclear weapons smaller, cleaner and more useable enhances the credibility of our threat to use them and therefore makes nuclear war less likely.

The purpose of this letter is not to suggest that we try to resolve this difference but only to note that the CIA paper's discussion of the neutron bomb does not acknowledge this long standing debate. Anyone reading the CIA paper would conclude that but for the KGB there would be no conflict on the neutron bomb. What I am saying is that there would have been some kind of conflict on the neutron bomb with or without the KGB.

In a word, the CIA statement can be interpreted as a gross exaggeration regarding the effectiveness of Soviet propaganda. Furthermore, some will view it as a thinly veiled and disdainful attack on the intelligence and integrity of those who opposed the neutron bomb for what they saw as highly rational and carefully considered reasons.

Does the Agency really wish to advance the proposition that U.S. policymakers -- including the numerous opponents of the bomb in Congress -- were taken in, not to say duped, by Soviet propaganda?

I will have the statement added to the hearing record as it stands, if you wish; but, I did want to draw to your attention another perspective on its meaning before the hearings go to press. The record will remain open for another fortnight, at which time the page proofs will be sent to the Government Printing Office.

Let me also take the opportunity to thank you for your letter of June 12, in which you comment on my quotation in Time magazine. Your points were well taken. I was particularly pleased to see that you endorse my intention to clarify

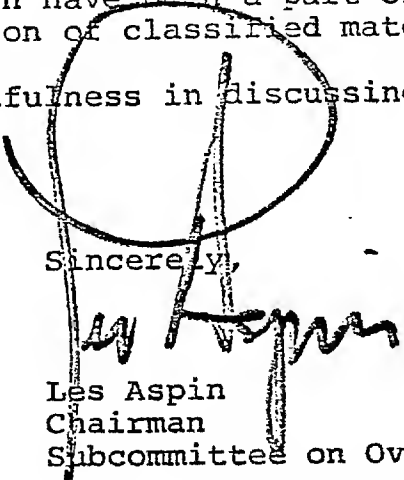
- 3 -

for the public the issues which have been a part of the controversy over the publication of classified materials.

I appreciate your thoughtfulness in discussing this and other matters with me.

With all good wishes,

Sincerely,



Les Aspin
Chairman
Subcommittee on Oversight

SECRET

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27 JUN 1978

OLC # 73 1543/2

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

VIA : Deputy Director of Central Intelligence
Deputy Director for Operations

FROM :
Chief, Covert Action Staff/IAD

SUBJECT : Reply to Congressman Aspin on "Neutron Bomb" Issue

1. Action Requested: That you release the attached letter to Congressman Aspin, which attempts to respond to his criticism (Tab A) of one aspect of the Unclassified Study on Soviet Propaganda you recently released to the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence.

2. Background: The Unclassified Study (Tab B) includes an Annex on the massive Soviet propaganda campaign against the neutron bomb, and makes several references to this campaign in its text. The annex concludes that the fact that the neutron bomb is a major issue in most European parliaments can be attributed partly to Soviet propaganda.

Congressman Aspin points out that there are legitimate military grounds on which to oppose development of the neutron bomb, and questions whether CIA was attempting to suggest that U.S. policymakers were duped by Soviet propaganda. It is our belief that the paper cannot possibly be faulted on the latter score, since we did not discuss the impact of Soviet propaganda in the U.S. On the other hand, it is perhaps a legitimate point to suggest that had we made reference to the respectability of some of the opposition to the neutron bomb our paper might have appeared more balanced. The letter to Congressman Aspin therefore suggests that the Committee could add a paragraph (text provided) at the end of the annex to make this point, if it so desired.

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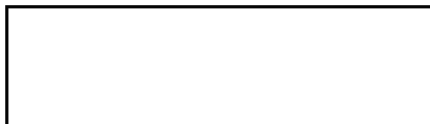
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You should be aware that the minority side of the HPSCI, which requested this study, is highly enthusiastic over its contents.

3. Recommendation: That you sign the letter to Representative Aspin.



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Attachments, 2 a/s

CONCUR:

/s/ JOHN N. McMAHON

27 JUN 1978

Deputy Director for Operations

Date

LS/

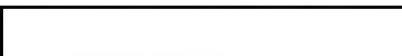
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Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

Date

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C/DDO/IAD/CAS/PP:



28 June 1978

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